

CONSERVATION SHOWCASE



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NRCS helps with Pontotoc Co. dam project

Protecting the city of Pontotoc, Miss. from flooding for 40-plus years, the Chiwapa Creek Floodwater Retarding Structure No. 3 was tapped for massive renovations, part of a \$888,000 rehab funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. When NRCS helped pay for the renovations, the city was able to develop the lake for fish habitat, providing a recreational outlet for the north Mississippi town.

The original structure was built in 1969, but as development spurred downstream, the dam was reclassified as a high-hazard dam, making it in need of additional work. Forty-seven homes, three apartment complexes and two businesses are located downstream from the structure.

In 2009, the structure was drained, the embankment was raised, the principal spillway structure was replaced, the auxiliary spillway was widened and the outlet structure was replaced to meet the requirements of a high-hazard dam. The work was completed by federal contract through the NRCS' Watershed Rehabilitation Program. Sponsors for the project included the city of Pontotoc, Chiwapa Water Management District and the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission.



Following massive improvements in 2009, this is the lake on Chiwapa Creek near Pontotoc, Miss.

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks provided assistance. The rehabilitation of the dam meets current dam safety standards and extends the life span of the structure for another 100 years.

While the structure was drained, Pontotoc developed fish habitat in the lake area, by adding piers and constructing other improvements adjacent to the lake. The lake is an important resource for the community as an integral part of Howard Stafford Park. The 54-acre lake is utilized for fishing, camping, picnicking and other water-based activities.

Congress passed the Watershed Rehabilitation Amendments of 2000 which amended the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act and authorized NRCS to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to watershed project sponsors in rehabilitating their aging dams.

